

A³ 2/3. (amended) The chain-shortened polynucleotide or salt thereof according to claim 1, wherein the polynucleotide or salt thereof has an average chain length of between about 0.1 k bases and about 1 k bases.

A⁴ 1-1/2 4. (amended) The chain-shortened polynucleotide or salt thereof according to claim 1, wherein the polynucleotide or salt thereof is in the form of a double stranded chain-shortened polynucleotide or salt thereof formed from two chain-shortened polynucleotides or salts thereof which are capable of forming a double strand.

3/3. (amended) The double stranded chain-shortened polynucleotide or salt thereof according to claim 4, wherein the two chain-shortened polynucleotides capable of forming a double strand are selected from the group consisting of polyinosinic acid and polycytidylic acid, polyadenylic acid and polyuridylic acid, polyinosinic acid analogue and polycytidylic acid, polyinosinic acid and polycytidylic acid analogue, polyinosinic acid analogue and polycytidylic acid analogue, polyadenylic acid analogue and polyuridylic acid, polyadenylic acid and polyuridylic acid analogue, and polyadenylic acid analogue and polyuridylic acid analogue.

A⁵ 4/6. (amended) A method for preparing the chain-shortened polynucleotide or salt thereof, the method comprising reacting a polynucleotide or salt thereof in a solution at about pH 7 to about pH 10 and at temperature between about 20 and about 110°C to shorten the chain, thereby forming a chain-shortened polynucleotide or salt thereof, comprising phosphodiester bonds, wherein up to about 3 percent of the phosphodiester bonds are 2'-5' phosphodiester bonds.

5/7. (amended) A method for preparing the chain-shortened polynucleotide or salt thereof, the method comprising treating a polynucleotide or salt thereof with a phosphodiesterase for chain-shortening, thereby forming a chain-shortened polynucleotide or salt thereof, comprising phosphodiester bonds, wherein up to about 3 percent of the phosphodiester bonds are 2'-5' phosphodiester bonds.

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18. (amended) A composition comprising a complex formed from a carrier effective for introducing a medicament into a cell and a chain-shortened polynucleotide or salt thereof as an essential ingredient, wherein the chain-shortened polynucleotide or salt thereof comprises phosphodiester bonds, such that up to about 3 percent of the phosphodiester bonds are 2'-5' phosphodiester bonds.

19 12. (amended) The composition according to Claim 8, wherein the composition is in the form of a pharmaceutical preparation.

20 13. The composition according to Claim 12, wherein the pharmaceutical preparation comprises an interferon inducing agent, immune activating agent, intracellular nuclease activating agent, cancer treating agent or preventive agent, or hepatitis treating agent or preventive agent.

Add the following new claims:

21 14. (new) The method according to Claim 4, wherein the polynucleotide is polyinosinic acid or analogue thereof, polycytidylic acid or analogue thereof, polyadenylic acid or analogue thereof, or polyuridylic acid or analogue thereof.

22 15. (new) The method according to claim 5, wherein the polynucleotide is polyinosinic acid or analogue thereof, polycytidylic acid or analogue thereof, polyadenylic acid or analogue thereof, or polyuridylic acid or analogue thereof.

23 16. (new) The composition according to claim 8, wherein the polynucleotide is polyinosinic acid or analogue thereof, polycytidylic acid or analogue thereof, polyadenylic acid or analogue thereof, or polyuridylic acid or analogue thereof.

24 17. (new) The composition according to claim 8, wherein the polynucleotide or salt thereof has an average chain length of between about 0.1 k bases and about 1 k bases.

18 25 18. (new) The chain-shortened polynucleotide or salt thereof according to claim 8, wherein the polynucleotide or salt thereof is in the form of a double stranded